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PATENT

Attorney Reference Number 739-73364-01  
Application Number PCT/GB2004/003908

Amendments to the Claims

1. (Original) A self-lubricating bearing for use in low pressure, high frequency, small amplitude applications, the bearing having a self-lubricating liner and a counterface surface in close sliding contact therewith, the counterface surface having a surface finish of less than 20nm and a hardness of less than in the region of 1000VPN.
2. (Original) A self-lubricating bearing according to Claim 1, wherein the surface finish of the counterface surface is in the range of 5nm to 20nm.
3. (Currently Amended) A self-lubricating bearing according to Claim 1 ~~or~~ 2, wherein the counterface surface comprises a coating on a curved surface, the curved surface having an electrolytically ground finish.
4. (Original) A self-lubricating bearing according to Claim 3; wherein the coating over the electrolytically ground finish has a thickness of between 1-5µm.
5. (Currently Amended) A self-lubricating bearing according to Claim 3 ~~or~~ 4, wherein the coating is a chemical deposition coating, a physical vapour deposition coating or an ion plating coating.
6. (Currently Amended) A self-lubricating bearing according to ~~any preceding claim~~ Claim 1, wherein the bearing is a spherical bearing.
7. (Original) A self-lubricating bearing according to Claim 6, wherein the spherical bearing includes a ball, the ball providing the counterface surface.
8. (Currently Amended) A self-lubricating bearing according to ~~any preceding claim~~ Claim 1, wherein the operating conditions, in use, are at stresses of less than 35MPa, at a

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frequency of at least 0.1 Hz and with amplitudes comprising small angular motions of less than  $\pm 12^\circ$  rotation.

9. (Original) A method of constructing a self-lubricating bearing comprising the steps of:

- providing a self-lubricating liner with a curved surface;
- providing a counterface having a curved surface;
- electrolytically grinding the curved surface of the counterface to a surface finish of less than 20nm to produce a counterface surface having a hardness of less than 1000VPN; and
- placing the curved surfaces of the liner and the counterface surface in sliding contact with one another.

10. (Original) A method according to Claim 9, wherein the curved surfaces are correspondingly curved surfaces.

11. (Original) A method of operating a self-lubricating bearing having a self-lubricating liner and a counterface surface in close sliding contact therewith, the counterface surface having a surface finish of less than 20nm and a hardness of less than 1000VPN, wherein the operating conditions are at stresses of less than 35MPa, at a frequency of at least 0.1 Hz and with amplitudes comprising small angular motions of less than  $\pm 12^\circ$  rotation.

12. (Canceled)

13. (New) A method according to Claim 9, wherein the bearing is a spherical bearing comprising a ball, and the counterface is a surface of the ball.

14. (New) A method according to Claim 9, further comprising forming a coating on the curved surface of the counterface, wherein the coating provides the counterface surface in sliding contact with the liner.

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15. (New) A method according to Claim 14, wherein the coating is a chemical deposition coating, a physical vapour deposition coating or an ion plating coating.
16. (New) A method according to Claim 9, wherein the counterface surface has a hardness of less than 750VPN.
17. (New) A method according to Claim 14, wherein the coating has a thickness in the range of about 1-5µm.
18. (New) A method according to Claim 11, wherein the bearing is a spherical bearing comprising a ball, and the counterface surface is a surface of the ball.
19. (New) A method according to Claim 18, wherein the ball is a heat treated metal ball.
20. (New) A method according to Claim 19, wherein the ball has a physical vapour deposition coating providing the counterface surface in sliding contact with the liner.